

January 9, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lawler
324 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Support for H.R. 6718 - Professional Student Degree Act

Dear Representative Lawler,

As president and CEO of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), I write to thank you for your sponsorship of H.R. 6718 – the Professional Student Degree Act, on behalf of the nation's 520 regional public universities (RPUs).

As conferrers of almost 70% of all bachelor's and master's degrees earned at public four-year institutions, RPUs have been apprehensively following proposed changes to the definition of professional degrees at the Department of Education's RISE Committee negotiated rulemaking sessions. Without the relief offered by your legislation, students already facing the loss of Grad PLUS loans and the imposition of newly implemented loan limits could be forced to abandon plans to attain a professional degree or switch areas of study entirely.

This concern is especially prevalent among students seeking continued education in the health care and education fields. Originally charged by their state legislatures and communities with the education of vital nurses and teachers, RPUs continue to graduate most of the nation's nurses, educators, social workers, and public health professionals. The contributions and societal value of these graduates to their local communities are often overlooked or forgotten by policymakers, who focus on comparing debt-to-earnings ratios or amortization schedules.

For these reasons, AASCU is proud to endorse H.R. 6718 and greatly appreciates your leadership on behalf of our nation's postsecondary institutions and students. Thank you for your advocacy and recognition of the important role professional degree attainment plays in strengthening our national economy and local communities.

Sincerely,



Dr. Charles L. Welch
President and CEO
American Association of State Colleges and Universities